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SOCIALIST POLITICS

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Socialist Unity Party of New Zealand**

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Socialist Politics

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Contents

Issue No 88/2

Towards the 8th Conference	1
<i>by Marilyn Tucker</i>	
Draft Political Statement	5
Draft Statement on the National Question in New Zealand	13
Draft Statement on Women	20
Draft Statement on Unemployment	28
Money Raising is Mass Work	34
<i>by Bruce Skilton</i>	

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TOWARDS THE 8TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

by Marilyn Tucker

In October, the Socialist Unity Party will hold its 8th National Conference. This issue of Socialist Politics prints some of the draft documents the party will be discussing until then.

As outlined in the Draft Political Statement, the working class, and the SUP as an organised section of that class, are facing tremendous, new challenges. The party's Central Committee has been critical of the party's inability to get to grips with them.

Our theory, and therefore our strategy, hasn't kept pace with the enormous changes which have overtaken us; changes driven by the the revolution in science and technology; changes reshaping the world, and us along with it. Our class has expanded into new areas and shrunk, or perhaps even disappeared in some of its traditional ones. This process is unrelenting, and as yet our class hasn't learnt to deal with it.

The party's 7th National Conference resolution pointed to these developments, and emphasised their significance. In the three years since, however, we haven't developed this analysis much further. As a result we haven't been in a position to put forward policy which takes up workers' needs in the new conditions.

The labour movement was ill-prepared for state-monopoly's attacks, which made sure that the cost of the structural crisis was borne by the working class and small and medium business

and farming interests. These attacks intensified after the October sharemarket crash, when big business tried to recover its losses, again at the expense of our class.

Because we didn't have an agenda that promoted restructuring and new technology in a way which would benefit working people, we have been forced to respond to the Roundtable's. Workers need a strategy which puts our class back in the role of initiators. Staggering though it may already seem, the upheaval experienced so far is but a prelude to the change that lies ahead. Its pace will quicken, its scope will expand. The SUP must play its role in ensuring that our class is ready for this.

To be more effective in the mounting class battles waged by big business and the transnationals we must fully understand the new conditions. Our analysis must pierce the surface and get to the heart of events and phenomena, seeing them in their interconnection.

Change in New Zealand is a segment of global change, and we can only understand it if we view it in this context. The world is becoming increasingly interdependent, and growing numbers of people are aware of this. People in one part of the globe, for instance, know they can't escape the results of environmental blunders in another.

We are beginning to understand better that while the struggle between the two world systems and its ideologies will continue, those two systems must work together to ensure our common survival. The struggle between them must take new forms, and must not lead to military conflict.

The new approach the USSR is pursuing in international relations has played the role of a change agent in this regard, and brought dramatic results. With all earlier roads to peace and nuclear disarmament well and truly blocked, the Soviet Union set out to create a new one. It wasn't easy, but its working. It has led to a dialogue between the USSR and the US, which reached another level of maturity at the recent Moscow summit.

At long last the world has drawn back from the brink of nuclear disaster. People's attitudes are changing, and a new, more confident environment now exists. Optimism about the world's chances of surviving is penetrating the walls of doubts. People are beginning to feel that a nuclear free world is winnable.

The growing interdependence and integration of a world, still divided into antagonistic classes, brings diverse and complex questions. It calls for a new approach in many arenas. The economy is one of them. While capitalism's restructuring may bring it short-term gains, it is so shot through with contradictions, that it keeps stumbling over them.

The competition between the different centres of imperialism is heating up and people are the victims. New levels of unemployment, suffering and poverty are engulfing working people. Living standards are forced down to improve "competitiveness", but the resulting reduction in purchasing power compounds the difficulties of finding markets. Production is outstripping people's ability to buy. Markets are

being remodelled, but in a manner which in no way addresses the fundamental needs.

Today we need a new economic order which embraces the developing and socialist worlds on an equal basis. While helping to overcome deep-seated problems like the developing world's foreign debt, it would also help economies like ours, which are so dependent on international trade. This would move the world closer to international security, political and economic stability. But it would challenge the transnational companies' dominance, and they, together with their political allies are strongly resisting such a proposal.

While socialism is our goal, our party must put forward a programme which meets the immediate needs of working people. The present conditions demand economic policies which regulate the economy in a new way, which maintain and expand our productive base, so that the country can be put back to work, and farmers kept on the land. The major emphasis for our party is to work for such a programme in a way which unites the working class and builds its strength and authority. Urgent in this regard is the restructuring of the trade union movement along industrial lines.

The SUP is embarking on a period of debate. The more searching and questioning this debate is, the more likely we are to progress. The purpose of these draft documents is to start the debate. We now want branches, regions, fractions, cells and other party organisations to get fully involved. We want your opinions, concerns and proposals for change, to include in the new documents to go before Conference. We

would also like to hear the views of other activists in the labour movement.

DRAFT POLITICAL STATEMENT

The three years since our 7th National Conference have witnessed change unparalleled, in both pace and scope. It has raged about our country leaving little untouched. Its toll in human terms has been harsh, and everyone is only too familiar with the plight of the growing queues of jobless, the homeless, and those who are fighting to save family farms and small businesses. Living standards have been eroded, and regional communities put at risk. For many, life's fabric seems to have disintegrated.

But for communists it is not a time for fear and dismay. It is a time for understanding the tremendous challenges that lie before us.

Scientific and technological progress is opening up vast new potential for human advance. Our party, however, has still not grasped just how radical a break we must make in our thinking. The outcome is that, to a certain extent, we have got our feet stuck in the past.

This in turn has left its mark on the country's labour movement. Having previously won a leadership position in the trade union movement, our failure to give direction in this period of upheaval was a significant factor, though not the only one in that movement's aimlessness in the recent period. Instead of being

in a position where it could initiate change and represent workers' interests in the new conditions, it was cast in the role of responder, always trying to react to a confusing array of changes and not succeeding in doing this in a coherent way. It is imperative for us to come to terms with the changes taking place, and to understand their general direction and their contradictions. For despite the harm brought to countless numbers of people the overall direction of change is taking society forward because it is a response to the changes in the productive forces.

That's not saying that we agree with the particular changes that have been made, or the way they have been put into effect. For there can be no doubt that they have been introduced to benefit capital at the expense of the working people. It is saying that we have to examine the changes in their totality and take what is scientific and progressive from them while struggling against the heightened levels of exploitation and oppression they introduce.

The scale and pace is quite unlike anything experienced before. It has brought upheaval to both world systems. From the Soviet Union and other socialist countries the words *perestroika* and *glasnost* have become familiar everywhere. They describe the restructuring which is taking place and the democratic and open way it is being done. It is clearly showing to the people the real nature of the problem, the historical necessity of the changes and the importance of the people themselves being closely involved in the process.

It is the scientific and technological revolution which will increase productivity to meet mass needs for a higher standard of life

today, and continue the process into tomorrow where people's leisure time will need a large service population to make it culturally useful and elevating.

Capitalism too had no choice but to reconstruct its economy. It had to adapt to the revolution in science and technology to try to ease the pressure of sharpening contradictions and to respond to the increasing internationalisation of economic life. In doing this it has shown once again it still has the resources and the ability to adapt to new needs. Its formula is not a lasting one however. Yes, it has been strengthened, or given a new lease of life, but in a way which only relieves and doesn't resolve basic contradictions. Moreover it brings new ones into being.

As with socialism, productivity will grow with less people directly involved in production, but large numbers of people will be displaced not all of whom can be retrained and relocated by capitalism. And here we come to the fundamental difference between the two systems. The purpose of production of capitalism is profit and it is driven to its fulfillment by its own internal operations and economic laws. The needs of people conflict with the profit needs of capital.

In socialism the purpose of production is to meet the needs of people and restructuring promotes prospects for achieving this. There is no insoluble contradiction and this system will move on to reveal its full potential.

Today it is essential for communists to study and understand the role of the scientific and technological revolution. In socialism it is the key to future development. In capitalism it is the start of the same fundamental change in production and services. That side of it is

irresistible. The purpose which it serves and the problems it creates require working people to analyse how best to fight in the interests of their class and the future of all people, because both are inseparably linked today.

Today, as never before, workers' leadership is needed which understand the workers' role historically, sees the changes within the work force today, and can advance the necessity for workers' organisations to restructure and adapt their agendas to meet the new and irreversibly changed conditions.

The formation of the CTU was a recognition of this need, but reorganisation at union level is lagging behind. If this process is not injected with renewed vigour and consciousness the new national organisation will be forever engaged in healing the movement's own self-inflicted wounds.

New technology makes demands on our class. Industry is being transformed and new work collectives with wider responsibilities are taking shape.

Old practices that led to strict demarcation between workers have become irrelevant, redundant and harmful. A more flexible workforce more involved in decision making is required.

This stems from the need of the new production methods to use workers knowledge to a greater extent. In addition the growing emphasis being placed on producing quality demands more worker commitment. This will not be achieved without motivation and this in turn requires more involvement in the making of all the decisions relevant to the industry.

While obviously in capital's immediate interests such developments will also furnish workers with more skills and help prepare them for their future role as managers of production in socialist society.

In helping to break down the old craft hangovers in unionism these changes will assist the reorganisation of the union movement along lines of class and industry, a development long overdue. This will lay the the basis for greater unity.

In appreciating the need for flexibility in this regard we clearly distinguish it from the other elements of labour market flexibility which monopoly, led by the Roundtable, is calling for, and which we are implacably opposed to.

The purpose of the demand for deregulation of the labour market is clearly the destruction of trade union organisation, to open the way for an even greater assault on living standards.

Working class unity needs to cross national borders. Our world is becoming increasingly integrated; capital is more internationalised. Workers too must reflect these objective trends and develop new levels of working class internationalism, in terms of both union and political organisation. For the NZ working class, CER requires us to work closer with our Australian class brothers and sisters. Moves towards a Pacific community raises similar questions in respect to working class organisations in the Pacific basin.

REORGANISING THE PARTY

Our Party has set out along the path of reorganisation. We needed to. The inertia that had bogged us down both in ideological, theoretical and organisational terms meant that we were no longer fulfilling our duties to our class. We are now faced with re-earning the influence we previously won. This won't happen overnight. Stagnation won't be overpowered quickly. Our concern now is to set in motion processes which will lead in this direction. This conference is charged with rebuilding our party in a way which conforms with the changes in society and the new demands being placed on it.

This requires involving the wider membership more in the decision making process. The Central Committee's decision to take a different approach to conference was one attempt to do this. It has had varying results, some very encouraging. The struggle to reinvigorate party life and regenerate political debate must continue. For this is not just for our own benefit. We have a responsibility to our class. When our theoretical shortcomings helped create a vacuum in the movement this effectively disarmed our class. It is still drifting, although a progressive section of the social democrats is organising to fill the leadership vacancy. The solution they're working on has a number of very positive components. They seek to put the trade union movement back into an initiating role. They seek to use science and technology to benefit working people, but they don't recognise the need to end the system of exploitation. Developing consciousness of this is still the role of a Marxist-Leninist party.

L S D^s

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is the main issue facing workers today. It is the main link in the political chain. By addressing it, we take on all other issues: technological change, restructuring, education, industrial and regional development, living standards, Maori rights, racism, sexism, crime and violence, and so on.

It affects us all - employed and unemployed alike. Families and the wider community also feel the brunt. Only monopoly benefits. Unemployment is in fact a deliberate policy monopoly pursues. It is part of its general offensive against working people. The Roundtable's desire for deregulation of the labour market depends on having a large pool of unemployed. As long as capitalism has existed, unemployment has been used to force wages down and to divide our class by pitting the jobless against those with jobs.

We are aware of that and we must not allow such strategies to succeed. A central element in the struggle against unemployment, and for an alternative economic direction which puts people before profits, is a united working class, working for unity and support in the community.

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

In New Zealand it was the Labour government who took on the economy's restructuring. Its agenda was set by the Roundtable and it was the section of capital that this body represents who gained the most from

the changes. The modernisation programme has been at the expense of workers, especially Maori, and women, small and medium farmers, small business and regional communities.

As indicated earlier the working class movement didn't get to grips with resisting this offensive and one of the central tasks of our 7th National conference, of building a mass working class movement against monopoly wasn't fulfilled. The most organised and spirited opposition to the attacks was mounted by the state unions in their campaign against the State Sector Bill.

Working class anger at the Labour government has continued to swell and is now being reflected in heavy loss of membership and support.

Calls for electoral alternatives are now surfacing, but these still see a solution within the private ownership system and look for a return to "basic labour principles".

Such an objective holds within it the kernel of its own limitations. Because of its dual class nature and reformist ideology, the Labour party and its variants will repeatedly vacillate, reflecting the balance of forces within society. To support the formation of a new social democratic organisation would indicate our inability to learn from history and a failing to lift our level of awareness beyond yesterday.

17 152x
Such support would give credence to the claims that the Labour party is a bourgeois party, whereas our theory tells us it isn't. It would inflict considerable harm on the working class movement, and put at risk the positive developments now taking place within it.

NOT
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A

x The ruling class will tolerate a Labour government (or any Government) only so long as it continues to fulfill the role it has been set. As quickly as possible, it will revert to the conservative forces it feels more secure with. The restructuring task is not complete, but the hardest obstacles are cleared. Capital will be prepared to revert to its familiar steed, especially if the present one continues to show signs of balking.

xx The Labour government has waltzed to the Roundtable's tune on some fundamental issues, but this will only be changed by the struggle of the working class to force such a change.

x We cannot be indifferent to which party forms the government, but without the trade unions and progressive action, our democratic rights and national assets will quickly disappear.

x Our role remains to foster working class unity, to build a mass movement capable of enforcing a leftward shift, and to instill it with socialist consciousness.

DRAFT STATEMENT ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN NEW ZEALAND

x Recent experience even within the most advanced social order indicates that on matters associated with the national question, on questions of ethnicity and of customs, culture and historical development it cannot be assumed that the national question is ever resolved.

Marxism affirms that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."¹ But what are classes, and what is the relationship of classes to ethnic and national groups in societies?

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.²

Obviously ethnic groups in class societies are almost always divided between different classes, but that does not mean that the class division of society affects all ethnic and national groups in the same way. In the historical process of formation of a society, different ethnic groups come to disproportionately occupy different positions in the class structure. This is the material basis of racism and national oppression. Racist and chauvinist ideology arises on this basis and in turn affects the selection of people from different ethnic groups for different class positions.

For example, the anti-black racism in the United States is derived from the period when

1. Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (section 1, *Bourgeois and Proletarians*).
2. Lenin, *A Great Beginning*, in *Collected Works*, Volume 29, page 421.

X Africans were enslaved in that country. The racist ideology of white superiority was both a consequence of the slave system of production and a pre-requisite for the reproduction of that system. Since the slaves were freed, the ideology has survived as a consequence of the restriction of blacks into the exploited and deprived classes of American capitalist society and as a major cause of that restriction. The racist division of the working class is in the interests of the capitalist class and is fostered by them. Research shows that by weakening workers' unity of action (especially in trade unions) it allows the capitalists to enforce lower wages and worse conditions for workers, especially for blacks but also for whites.³

X In this country, as with all colonised countries, the dominant culture has imposed its own more technologically advanced cultural and economic requirements upon the original inhabitants and in the process has taken by force almost all of the history of these colonised people.

X Traditional Maori society, which was based on communal tribal and slave production, has been largely transformed, and the Maori people are now mostly urbanised industrial workers engaged in capitalist production.

X The Maori people confronted the capitalist system of the colonists primarily as communal owners of the land, the main means of production. The colonial policy was based on alienating the natural resources from Maori ownership, using methods that became steadily more aggressive as the balance of power changed

3. See Albert Szymanski, *Class Structure*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1983, pages 355-496.

in favour of the colonial state with the increasing settler population. In the process of this alienation a whole people were decimated by various means, almost to the point of extinction. After the Land Wars armed Maori resistance faded, but the process of alienation has continued.

The Socialist Unity Party makes the point that colonial development continues in different and more advanced forms up to this day, and will continue as a natural part of the growth of international capitalism.

The Maori people survived, and government policy became oriented to assimilation. Especially since the Second World War, Maori people have migrated from traditional areas to the cities and become integrated into capitalist production as wage workers. Maori people have come to occupy mainly unskilled and poorly paid positions, particularly in material production. Since 1975 the Maori people have disproportionately suffered from capitalist restructuring.

Today the Maori people face a situation of dual oppression. The vast majority who are workers face the exploitation and deprivation that is the lot of the working class. They also suffer racist discrimination and prejudice with two kinds of material basis.

First is that derived from their concentration (as "new arrivals" in capitalist production) in the poorest, least skilled and educated strata of the working class. This racist ideology says "they are dirty and lazy and undisciplined and not interested in education", etc. - so let them be condemned to unemployment, to substandard education and

X housing and to imprisonment. In this way the Maori people suffer from the problems shared by the whole working class, but more severely.

X Second is the racism derived from the position of the Maori people as tangatawhenua, legitimate owners of important means of production, (lands, forests and fisheries) which have been (and are being) taken for capitalist use. This racist ideology, which underpins the oppression of the Maori people as a national group, says that "we are all New Zealanders", that Maori grievances "should be forgotten", and that recompense for past thefts constitutes "something for nothing", "racial discrimination against non-Maori New Zealanders" and even "apartheid"! It focuses on Maori "racism" and "gang violence" to divert the rest of the working class and petty bourgeoisie from support for the Maori people.

X The Socialist Unity Party also fights this racism and stands for the unity of the working class, and of all with interests opposed to monopoly capital.

66 Culturally and politically the Maori people have made significant advances in the recent period. Strenuous efforts are being made to defend Maori language and culture. Maori people are demanding the rights that were nominally guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi (rights conceded by the colonial state while it was still weak) and enforcing those demands with their strength and support from the rest of the working class. The return of Takaparawha (Bastion Pt.) to the Ngati Whatua people is a triumph of this struggle.

66 The Socialist Unity Party recognises that the tangatawhenua should and must have

returned to them certain inalienable rights as a distinct people. These rights are clearly outlined within the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi. The questions of land, forestry and fishing rights remain central to the Treaty of Waitangi.

Equally important and relevant is the question of language. Our Party supports the struggle to preserve the Maori language and enhance its mana. Our programme calls for the recognition of Maori as a full state language.

Maori language studies must be available to all who wish to participate. Greater use should be made of communications media to promote Maori language use and study as well as enhancing a greater understanding and appreciation of Maori culture and kawa.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The most important need of the Maori people is for relief from unemployment. Maori unemployment is proportionately far in excess of any other group in the country, and in regions with a very high Maori population unemployment is extreme. Maori people are discriminated against in the job market. Social problems associated with the disease of unemployment manifest themselves most visibly with violent actions against the community generally, encouraging the growth of racial divisions among the working class. Other problems not so visible but equally as devastating appear in the high suicide rate, a dramatic increase within mental institutions, as well as high dependence on drugs.

MAORI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The intense competition of our market oriented community is still foreign to Maori people, whose tradition is based on a tribal economy, and hence on a co-operative collective approach to all matters. This tradition is a good basis for a collective approach to economic and financial management of Maori interests as part of the general struggle against monopoly domination.

In this way, Maori economic development can contribute to meeting the needs of the mass of the Maori people (primarily for employment) rather than merely funding the rapid expansion and enrichment of the Maori bourgeoisie (the bourgeois version of racial equality).

HEALTH, INCOMES, HOUSING

Many of the health problems endemic to Maori people stem from lack of work and lack of adequate housing. Poor food and poor dietary habits lead directly to health problems.

Low incomes exacerbate the problems, and make obtaining adequate housing and medical care even more difficult. High infant mortality and smoking rates contribute to the dismal picture of Maori living standards.

EDUCATION

Education is a vexed problem. There is no doubt that a lack of educational qualifications makes Maori more vulnerable to unemployment because they cannot compete in the job market place. The reasons Maori are under represented

among those with higher educational qualifications have a dual character. Class oppression affects all workers in a similar way. But national oppression which arises from the lack of national rights for Maori also denies them equal opportunity. The Socialist Unity Party stands for the all-round development of all children.

The national question is likely to produce much more subjectivity than objectivity and for that reason, Party members have to try to react as objectively as possible to any consideration of this question. It is a difficult matter: the requirements of national minorities constantly change, and because national feelings can turn very rapidly to national exclusiveness and chauvinism, no solution can be taken for granted as permanently satisfactory.

DRAFT STATEMENT ON WOMEN

This government's drive towards a free market economy has resulted in an ever increasing number of impoverished people. With the deepening recession and drift to the right in recent years, an increasing feminisation of poverty is taking place i.e. women feature disproportionately in the ranks of the unemployed and lower wage brackets.

Women are particularly affected by capitalist exploitation, and this has been aggravated by present economic policies. They

face double oppression; not only as workers, but also from sexism and chauvinism. "Women are oppressed by men because of the forms their lives have had to take in class society, in which both men and women have been oppressed by the ruling class".¹

While socialism will provide the material base for achieving equality for women in New Zealand society, it will not be won without changing the many entrenched attitudes that have been a major factor in the oppression of women under capitalism.

WORKING WOMEN

Most women will spend time in the work force through economic necessity and for reasons of their own self esteem. A large percentage of these women will have children, continue working and also running their households.

In two parent families there is becoming a greater necessity for two incomes and in general a woman's economic role is seen as secondary to that of her male partner. There has been an increasing shift towards single parent families where the woman is sole provider for her children. In both situations where the woman is employed she is usually subjected to the double shift syndrome. She has two jobs, she is a member of the working force and also manager of her family and household. Her unpaid and voluntary labour in the home is not recognised. In general, the burden of domestic responsibilities fall upon women.

1. Charnie Guettel, *Marxism and Feminism*, 1974.

Working women are subject to a greater exploitation than men, as they are usually concentrated in basic grades and in industries where wages are low and work conditions poor - the women intensive industries. This especially applies to Maori, Pacific Island and other minority women. Assisting the greater exploitation of women workers is the fact that they face special problems in becoming active politically in their work place and as trade unionists. Many women have very little spare time, lack confidence, are inexperienced in voicing their opinions, and are seen as inferior. This allows employers to avoid equal pay provisions, pay lower wages, forego redundancy payments, and generally intimidate their women workers.

Due to family responsibilities and the lack of access to fulltime employment many women are forced to take up part-time employment in these women labour intensive industries.

Many such industries have been subjected to the breaking down, or casualisation of permanent work. This means that women in these areas are faced with uncertainty of job security and have very little say over what hours they work.

Most working women have certain needs that are not taken into account by employers and capitalism as a whole. Very few employers offer paid maternity leave, adequate leave for care of family members, child care and grievance procedures to combat sexual harassment.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND WOMEN'S UNPAID AND VOLUNTARY LABOUR

Official unemployment statistics for women are very misleading. This stems from the fact that women are not seen as individuals but as part of a family unit or partnership. The number of women who would like to work probably far exceeds the official number of female unemployed.

A small concession that has been made is women are now able to register with the Department of Labour as seeking fulltime employment and take part in Access schemes.

Women who want to work often find acquiring and keeping jobs hard. Women with families will have limited or no access to child care and are unable to work because of this. They will probably find the skills they have gained through managing their household are not recognised by employers and society. All women have been disadvantaged by an education system that offered little to women in the way of non-traditional work options and positive women role models.

The little community support available is being undermined by monopoly's attempts to dismantle the public welfare system. Women will once again be expected to use their voluntary labour in caring for disadvantaged groups, such as the elderly, intellectually and physically disabled. Most women who work in the home are raising their families with little community support. They face economic dependence and hardship on a single income, and experience isolation and loneliness in suburbs bare of amenities. Unemployed single women also

experience this isolation, and loneliness and poverty.

Capitalism's desire for a flexible, mobile, and unorganised labourforce is having a serious impact on small communities, families and friends. This especially affects Maori and Pacific Island women who are often the mainstay of their families and tribal groupings. This brings added oppression as cultural values continue to come into conflict with the interests of capital. Women are very much affected by the lack of affordable housing. It is still much harder for women to gain finance when buying homes. Women, especially Maori and Pacific Island women are more likely to rent accommodation for large periods of their lives.

CHILDREN AND CHILD CARE

An issue that will affect most women sometime is children and childcare. Not having access to childcare is a factor which stops many women becoming actively involved in the workforce and other spheres of life. Those women who work fulltime and have children would undoubtedly find that adequate child care would relieve them of much stress and pressure.

Women must also have the right to choose when and whether they have families. Contraception and abortion should be both free and readily available.

Women have very little representation on the decision making bodies of the state or society as a whole, although this is beginning to change. This reflects their position as a disadvantaged group which has been historically restricted to

the home and raising children, and which has been excluded from the main stream of society.

ANTI-WOMEN PROPAGANDA

While all workers experience the effects of the attacks on living standards and democratic rights, women have been singled out for special treatment. Historically, as at present, women's rights have been the target of many reactionary campaigns. Many of these right wing attacks have taken place when there have been clearly expressed majority views supporting such issues as a woman's right to choose abortion, the right to childcare, and equal pay for work of equal value.

A propaganda campaign against women's right to work has often been used in times of economic recession to divert attention from the real causes of unemployment. A catch phrase of this economic situation is "A woman's place is in the home".

Women and children suffer from the operations of big business where there is complete freedom to exploit the sexuality of women.

Women are often exploited in advertising to sell products - we are all too familiar with women draped over fancy cars. Advertising and the mass media usually have a stereotypical view of what women should look like and the roles they are involved in. This promotes unreal images of women and negates their differences in ethnicity, lifestyles etc. This has profound repercussions for children's and adults' views of women in our society.

Many women feel incredible pressure to conform to society's standards of beauty and behaviour. This results in lack of self esteem, depression and health problems such as bulimia and anorexia. The image of women portrayed in the media certainly affects men's view of women, and is reflected in their many sexist attitudes and practices. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry which falsely portrays women and is sanctioned by capitalism.

Pornography also has a huge effect on women and men's attitudes towards them. "Pornography threatens the safety and welfare of women and children by telling male viewers that women are sex object available to be abused. The chance of real violence against us increases".²

There is little legislation on pornography and many loopholes to allow its distribution. We support the Governments initiative in setting up a commission to examine this question. Legislation on its own won't solve underlying questions, however. Education must be a central ingredient of any campaign.

POSITIVE ACTION REQUIRED

Some basic demands must be met before it will be possible for women to play a full and equal role in society - in the economy, social and political life.

2. Women Against Pornography, *It's About Time*, page 18.

Women require:

- * The right to work - considered by the UN as a basic human right.
- * Equal pay for work of equal value
- * Free, 24 hour, government subsidised, child care for children of all ages.
- * Positive action to overcome women's unequal position - to promote their participation in the organisations of working people and in public and political affairs.
- * Recognition of women's voluntary and unpaid work.
- * Recognition of women's dual role as workers and mothers through special rights and provisions at work, e.g. paid maternity leave, family leave, grievance procedures for sexual harassment, etc. Community responsibility and support for children and household services.
- * Better education for women and re-entry into the work force programmes for those women who require it.
- * The right to plan their families.
- * Freedom from discrimination, exploitation and sexual degradation.

- * To be treated as individuals, and not just as a part of a family unit or partnership.

DRAFT STATEMENT ON UNEMPLOYMENT

We are back in the days of growing hunger and homelessness and the social problems that flow from accepting and allowing high levels of unemployment.

Unemployment is now a permanent inbuilt feature of our society. From 1960 onwards in our recent history unemployment has steadily been increasing. From 1975 to 1984 (the period of the National Government) unemployment went up more than 400%, and from 1984 to January 1988 (the period of the Labour Government) unemployment has gone up nearly 100% (see Table 1).

TABLE 1**Registered unemployment in New Zealand 1960-1988**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Percentage Unemployed</i>
1960 - 1964	0.1
1965 - 1969	0.3
1970 - 1974	0.2
1975 - 1975	0.9
1980 - 1984	4.1
1985	4.1
1986	4.9
1987	6.4
1988 (<i>January</i>)	7.6

Sources: OECD Labour Force Statistics, 1965-1985, Table 5.1, p. 30. For 1986, 1987 and January 1988 average unemployment: Department of Labour, Monthly Employment Operations.

This is not the first time we have had high unemployment in New Zealand, but it is a new situation with new conditions. The Draft Political Statement outlines some of the general changes and the reality that now confronts us. Unemployment (or the threat of unemployment) has been with working people in New Zealand for as long as capitalism has.

YOUTH DOLE CUTS

The minister of employment has recently announced the cutting of the dole for the under 20's age group and replacing it by targeting training and education. Both the areas of training and education are already under-funded for the role they are to perform.

The whole proposal rests on means testing which will see a large section of the community

receive very little except for their universal entitlements. The proposal is essentially one from Treasury. It also reflects the wishes of the Roundtable in its bid to cut back and dismantle the welfare structure. It will also be used politically to try and represent a drop in the unemployment figures (See table 2). These dangers must be resisted in the working of the scheme.

TABLE 2

Unemployment by age (percentages)

	<i>All</i>		<i>Maori</i>		<i>Pacific Island Polynesian</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>15-19</i>	18.3	21.2	27.3	31.8	27.5	28.4
<i>20-24</i>	7.9	10.3	14.7	23.0	10.8	14.9
<i>25-34</i>	3.7	9.0	8.8	18.2	7.1	14.4
<i>35-44</i>	2.1	5.8	5.7	10.8	5.8	8.6
<i>45-54</i>	2.0	4.7	5.0	8.8	7.2	8.7
<i>55-64</i>	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.8	7.2	12.0
<i>65+</i>	4.1	5.6	11.4	13.6	22.2	22.2
<i>Total</i>	5.2	9.0	12.0	19.1	9.7	14.5

Source: New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, March 1988.

CONSERVATION CORPS

This is another initiative launched by the Minister of Employment. In this proposal people will work for 12 months for less than half the 20 year old dole rate. As the end of the 12 months they receive \$1,000 to help them further their education/training. The Government again is

taking an area of real concern to people, i.e. the environment, and trying to use that against the employed to slash the remuneration they receive. For us we need to distinguish between the idea - the preservation of the environment - and the methods being used to pursue that idea.

RETRAINING

It is not necessary to go into detail about what currently exists in this area except to outline some basic facts. ACCESS trainees receive the dole plus 10%. ACCESS must not be used by employers to displace full-time and part-time workers. The potential to become corrupt must be checked by democratic involvement. ACCESS is currently dominated by employers' interests and could become most dangerous without such safeguards. Retraining is part of life today. Workers are required by economic circumstance to face this. We as a party need to develop our own policy in regard to this question. The general view we have put forward so far is that training should be of a high quality aimed at meeting the community's needs and not those of private employers: this now needs to be translated into much more specific detail.

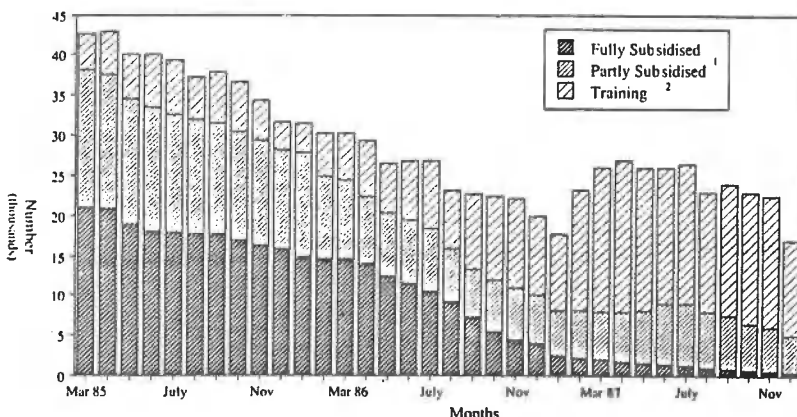
Proposals like the Northland "Housing and Jobs" needs to be given much higher political priority and acted on more effectively. The National Party has now picked up this idea and is advancing it to its political advantage.

Graph 1 shows how effective this Government has been since march 1985 in reducing the income and the job options of the unemployed.

GRAPH 1

Employment and training schemes 1985-1987

(Number in each at the end of the month)



Note: (1) Excludes student employment subsidies
 (2) Includes Maori Access, foundation and employment rich courses.

Source: Department of Labour, Monthly Employment Operations.

ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT

Both Labour and National Parties appear to want to minimise the very important work of this Commission. There are some excellent positive points in the Commission's findings and also a lot of community knowledge contained in the submissions to the Commission. We need to look at how we as a Party can take up some of the positive recommendations and drive them home so the politicians cannot ignore the concerns and requirements of the community.

GENERAL

More people are aware of the problems of unemployment now than 10 years ago, but most also believe that unemployment as a problem is unsolvable and is permanent. The policies we advance need to challenge this mental block head on and clearly show there is an economic and political alternative. Our work amongst the unemployed organisations must be clearly seen to be consolidating the organisations both locally and nationally and at the same time strengthening the link between the unemployed organisations and the trade union movement.

We should be actively involving ourselves in working with the unemployed, and their organisations, tying together their demands around a political programme that is aimed at meeting working people's needs.

Monopoly has used the past three years of the Labour Government's free market policy to cream off huge profits at the expense of the workers and society.

Capitalism and its leading forces (big business, monopolies, the banks) are determined on driving down the conditions of working people. Part of their tactical position is to have a large pool of trained and educated unemployed keeping the pressure on those with jobs to drive down wages and conditions.

Capitalism's main public representative the business Roundtable is not happy with just wrecking the rural economy, gutting the manufacturing sector (throwing thousands of workers on the scrap heap), corporatising and restructuring the state service sector, (throwing thousands of workers on the scrap heap) - they

now want to see the welfare state savagely cut back and means tested out of existence. Our party must stand resolutely against these claw-backs of the gains made by working people in the bitter struggles of the past.

MONEY RAISING IS MASS WORK

(A.B. Skilton: Reprinted from an earlier issue of Socialist Politics)

Very serious consideration and attention needs to be given to all aspects of money raising in our Party, for the lack of adequate funds is hampering our work. First of all a survey shows that the average raised per head of the membership does not come up to existing possibilities.

We do not overlook the fact that uneven political development must always exist in our Party. Also, some people have a flair for money raising, others have not. Political conviction will vary from member to member. Some comrades will have personal contact with many workers, who, if asked, will give constantly, but "asked" is the operative word. Other comrades will be working in relative isolation from the working class which makes the task more difficult for them. But most of these have fairly well-off friends in wider circles. These and other factors need to be taken into account, but all can raise some financial support for our Party.

To obtain improvement in the work of money raising the main drive must be to secure political conviction, not only in the importance of our cause but the vital role of money in achieving it. There are many comrades, leading comrades, whose last thought is that of asking their many daily contacts for financial support, if ever they think of it at all. In fact, it would be a profitable and interesting exercise if every party member, particularly the leading ones, were to examine just what they have given and raised from others during say, the last twelve months.

There is not one of us who could not raise more money providing we constantly kept it in mind in our day to day contact. If in our thinking we linked it up with every phase of our work. The same prime consideration goes in the the search for, and recruitment of, new members to our Party. All the factors mentioned apply here too in the drive to sell Tribune and Socialist Politics, and obtain postal subscription for them as well as donations. Our Party stands or falls on the work of its primary organisations, the Party Branches, and their membership. Therefore we need to mount a wide party discussion to secure the needed correction for improvement in the Branches and at all levels of Party organisation.

For a comrade to give and to raise from others requires conviction. Understanding that the way to socialism is through struggle to win the masses to the proletarian Party, that this must be brought about by personal work, personal sacrifice and above all that money is essential to facilitate the struggle. With political understanding, with acceptance of participation in the struggle, one gives to the point of sacrifice, but only if one sees the need. With this outlook

we approach others. With this understanding our organisations become conscious of the need for money, and plan to have funds and to handle them in a business like way. Our political conviction, our class consciousness has its ethical side, solidarity, honesty. But honesty in money matters, in collective activity involving money demands more than personal integrity; it demands organisation, personal responsibility, book-keeping, correct disposal of funds. Consequently, there must be accounting and strict auditing.

This is a moral and practical duty, to keep faith in each other and with supporters, to know why money was used, where it came from, what is held, what is owed, what sums are needed, and what sums can be obtained. Cases of theft or shortages rarely occur when proper accounting and auditing is done in good time in a regular and systematic way as it is usually due to muddlement. When it does occur, where there are no extenuating circumstances; experience shows it is usual to repeat the offence if there is access to cash; and in the case of an otherwise good and useful comrade, then no further cash responsibility should be given.

It is utterly impossible to avoid serious difficulties in the whole or part of the organisation if business methods have not kept pace with growth and complexity. Some branches have not yet got down to having a regular item on the branch agenda from the payment of dues and donations, for the discussion of money raising on the above lines, to regular monthly statements of Branch accounts and balance sheets, and the preparation of estimates of expenditure on say, a half yearly basis. Targets for the achievement of

a payment of dues, personal pledges, regular guarantors and donations are in many cases not being set by Branches.

Above all a regular monthly check-up is required on all Branch agendas on all aspects of the above. With the growth of our Party in political stature and organisationally, there has taken place a corresponding growth of income, but it is still not sufficient to meet increased costs and expenditure on capital development and circulating capital. We face difficulties, but must note them in good time and overcome them.

Money is a weapon - a tool - a lubricant - it is a political and organisational question.

Correct practice in raising money, in selling Tribune, Socialist Politics and other material, much of the using of cash is mass work and a powerful part of organising. Every appeal for money must be concrete, but not just for the Socialist Unity Party, not simply for socialism, not simply to meet debt. For the Party's programme for New Zealand. For the Tribune. For new printing machinery to reduce production costs etc. For the production of a Bulletin leaflet or pamphlet. So we can spread our message around a particular working class need.

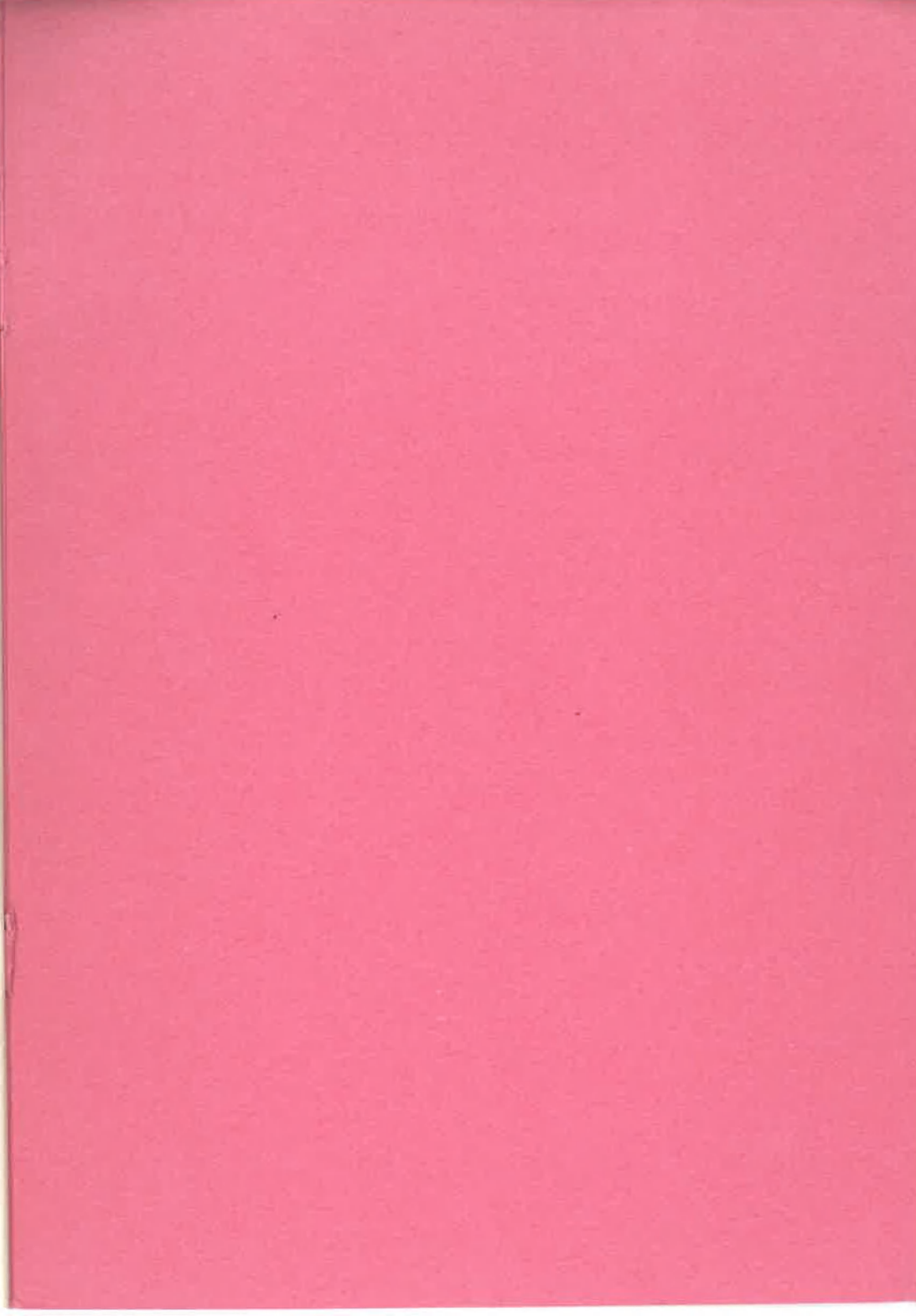
It is politically and organisationally better to obtain small donations from a lot of people than say a large one from one person. The one is mass work, the other is not. Certainly try to obtain the large individual sum, use it for mass work, and strive to equal it, or surpass it, using funds to reach out to organise. This is correct. Branches in which members are not raising money from friends and supporters but in which members meet all costs are not mass work branches, and it is evasive, an opportunist

practice. Money raising, as in all other party work cannot be separated from the general political consciousness and morale of the party.

An improvement in methods of work and steps to raise the ideological level of the membership must go hand in hand with special attention to this important task. An improvement in what is known as Party spirit means increased awareness of the importance of our cause and the need to do all we can to advance it. Steps to obtain greater conviction at all levels on the political role of money cannot but help to improve results which are so urgently needed. As Lenin as said:

Only those who carefully study, ponder over and independently solve the problems and destiny of their Party deserve to be called Party members and builders of the Workers' Party.

Much of the material in this article has been adapted from a Bulletin by the late J.B. Miles, former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia.



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